



THE  
LITERARY MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1735.

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ARTICLE XXI.

WOTTON's *Short View of* GEORGE HICKES's *Grammatico-Critical and Archeological Treasure of the ancient Northern Languages; with some Notes, by a Lover of the ancient Northern Literature; and an Appendix to the Notes, faithfully and entirely translated into English, from the Latin Original, by MAURICE SHELTON, of Barmingham-Hall in the County of Norfolk, Esq; one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said County, &c. To which are added, by the same Translator, Other curious and proper Notes for a farther Illustration of the Text, a short Appendix of Notes of Correction, &c. and a Dedication to the Right Honourable James Reynolds, Esq; Lord Chief Baron of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer at Westminster. London; printed for the Author, and sold by D. Browne, Bookseller, at the Black Swan without Temple-Bar. MDCCXXXV. Price sow'd five Shillings, bound seven Shillings. Quarto. Containing 136 pages, exclusive both of the Author's and Translator's Dedications, and the last mention'd Appendix.*



IN order to give the reader a proper idea of this useful and curious work, it will be necessary to set before him a general view of the several persons intentions whose names are mention'd in the title. In the first place, Dr. *George Hickes* printed his *Treasure of the ancient Northern Languages* at *Oxford*, in two volumes, *Folio*, A. D. 1705; with intent to furnish the studious and industrious peruser with all possible helps towards his acquiring a perfect understanding of the northern languages and antiquities. In 1708, *William Wotton*, batchelor in divinity, observing that *Hickes's Treasure* was very little known in *England*, scarce at all in foreign nations, wrote this short treatise, in order to recommend it, by shewing its nature and value: he dedicated it to the now duke of *Chandos*, then the right honourable *James Bridges*, Esq; and, to make his epitome more universally known, pen'd it in *Latin*. Our translator, Mr. *Sbelton*, has pursued still the same design of restoring the knowledge of the ancient northern languages to its deserv'd reputation, and of encouraging

men of genius and leisure to the study of those antiquities which concern our own nation. To effect this, we have in this treatise offer'd us an account of *Hickes's Treasure*, and an explanation of its worth and use. To both these points we shall offer the peruser some satisfaction.

The two *folio* volumes of *Hickes* contain a great variety of curious pieces, which have only this in common, that they relate all to the promoting the knowledge of the northern languages, and are so managed as to present to the reader's mind a thousand entertaining things on subjects where they were least to be expected. In his dedication to prince *George of Denmark*, he takes occasion to depart from the common mode of dedicators; and, instead of making it merely a panegyrick, discourses excellently on the agreement among the northern tongues, of their near affinity with our own, and of the origin of the people from whom we derived it. A long preface, relating to this work, follows the dedication; in which he gratefully acknowledges the assistance he has received from persons addicted to this kind of literature; such

as *William Nicholson*, bishop of *Carlisle*; *William Elstob*, who translated bishop *Lupus's* homily; *William Hopkins*; *Edmund Gibson*, famous for his elegant *Saxon* chronicle, publish'd long before; *Edward Thwaites*, who put lish'd an accurate edition of the *Saxon* heptateuch, and who corrected the sheets of this *Treasure* going to and coming from the press. He mentions also with honour *Jonas Salanus* and *John Perinskiold*, two learned *Swedes*. He then excuses himself as to those slips and errors which, in so long a work, he may fall into; and remarks, how grievously some great critics (particularly father *Hardouin*) have erred, for want of competent skill in these languages. In the close of his preface to his *Anglo-Saxon* grammar, he informs the student, in this sort of knowledge, what path he must tread in order to arrive at that perfection he aims at, and of the order in which the northern languages are to be learned.

This noble *Treasure* consists of two parts; the one containing three grammars and two dissertations; the other *Humphry Wanley's* catalogue of *Anglo-Saxon* books. The first grammar is an *Anglo-*

*Saxon* and *Mæso-Gothick* one.

In the seventeen first chapters of this work are contained all that young students need to learn, in order to their understanding these ancient languages. In the nineteenth chapter *Hickes* treats at large of the changes which have happen'd in this language, of their periods, and the books written in the several dialects thereof. In the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters he discourses at large of the *Saxon* poetry; shewing that their verse consisted in measure, and not in rhyme; that is, in a certain harmonious disposition of syllables, and not in a repetition of the same sound at the end of lines. Afterwards, he speaks of the *Semi-Saxon* poetry, and gives us a specimen of rhimes therein: a wonderful collection of curious passages, quotations, entire poems, &c. are gather'd in these chapters; so that they swell to a reasonable book of themselves. His next is a grammar of the *Franco-Teutonic* language; that is, that used by the *Franks*, and in a great part of *Germany* subject to *Charlemagne* and his sons. In this he proves, that the *Franks* made use of letters before they receiv'd the Christian Faith. He informs us as to the most famous persons who

have left any thing in this language; as *Harabanus Maurus*, *Melchior Goldastus*, *Otfried* of *Wiramberg*, &c. To the *Franco-Teutonic* grammar he adds a little dictionary of some *French* and *Italian* words, whose originals are to be fetch'd from the northern languages only; and with it a tract of the poetry of the *Franks*. In this dictionary he demonstrates how miserably *Ferrarius* and *Menage* blunder in their originals of a great many words. The *Franks* had two sorts of poetry; one wherein the quantity of syllables, and a nice disposition of words, in a due order, are observed; such is the ancient *Cotton* harmony: the other, ending in rhyme of this sort, is *Otfried's Evangelical History*. The life of *St. Annon* is written in the same way; and with some hymns of this kind the *Franco-Teutonic* grammar is concluded. The *Islandic* grammar of *Ru-nolphus Jonas* is the last reprinted by *Hickes*; but he has added many things of his own, especially in treating of the ancient *Runic* monuments of the *Cimbri*, or *Danes*. He exhibits also many curious specimens of their writings in copper-plates.

*The Dissertation concerning the Excellence of the Northern*

*Languages*, written at the pressing instances of *Sir Bartholomew Shower*, a lawyer of great eminence, is a piece of great value, and justly styled by *Wotton* an *Herculean* labour. In it *Hickes* examines many points of law, as well as matters of antiquity, and acquaints us with their true nature, causes, and the variations they have undergone; producing, on all occasions, proper vouchers, which have generally the charm of novelty, tho' written so many ages ago: as for example; he informs us how, in the *Saxon* times, twice in every year solemn courts were held in each county; wherein wills, sales, and other donations and alienations of Goods, moveable or immoveable, were ratify'd and confirm'd; to which there was a lawful appeal for determining suits in inferior courts. In these courts the bishop sat as judge, with the king's *Reeve*, or alderman, and the *Thanes*, or freemen of the same county; nay women, as well ecclesiastics as laics, appeared there; where causes were heard and determin'd (not by twelve men, as hath been the custom since the *Norman* times) but by plurality of voices. These points, and many others, he makes good by records of un-

doubted

doubted credit. The names of witnesses appearing in charters, and other writings quoted by him, affords occasion to consider *Saxon*, *Danish*, and *Norman* surnames. Juries, their introduction and original, are next discanted on: he affirms them to have been brought in here by the *Normans*, and to have been brought by them out of *Scandia*; but others, not without some shew of reason, incline rather to derive them from the *Britons*; i. e. the *Welsh*. From juries he passes to testaments or wills, mentioning various singularities in respect to those in the times of which he treats: as, that women had a power of bequeathing legacies in the life-times of their husbands; that copyholds could not be alienated without the king's leave; that executors in wills were not specify'd, the county, hundred, and tything-courts, taking on them and executing that trust, donations of the living naturally follow the wills of the dead; and, in discoursing on them, *Hickes* very fully and clearly explains the rules necessary to be understood for distinguishing the age and authenticity of charters. It is impossible to reckon up, in this abstract, the bare heads

of those curious and instructive disquisitions which are contained in this dissertation; the lawyer, the historian, the politician, the divine, may all find things useful to them in their professions, and the keys whereby they may come at more. *Hickes* treats of all subjects thoroughly; he goes to the bottom of them, illustrates every point he touches, and confers much more knowledge than the titles of his pieces promise; nay, he even does his endeavour to make his readers authors, by pointing out useful works, furnishing the materials, laying down the method, and frequently giving specimens of the manner in which they may be successfully done.

We have next the honourable Sir *Andrew Fountaine's* epistolary dissertation upon the *Anglo-Saxon* coins, address'd to *Thomas* lord *Herbert*, at that time lieutenant of *Ireland*. These coins are exhibited in ten most curious copper-plates. In this dissertation the various uses, and of consequence the great value, of such coins are very accurately and elegantly display'd; and the very curious and learn'd author has, with a great deal of pains, unfolded the inscriptions which adorn these pieces; and

and has left nothing unremark'd, which an inquisitive and judicious reader would be desirous to know; on which account his work has been received with very great applause.

The second book contains a catalogue of all the books and charters that are found in any of our libraries, wrote either in *Anglo-Saxon*, or relating to *Anglo-Saxon* antiquities. The author of this catalogue was *Humphry Wanley*, a man, as *Hickes* calls him, of singular parts. In his prefatory discourse, inscribed to the then right honourable *Robert Harley*, Esq; afterwards earl of *Oxford*, he gives an account of the nature and use of his catalogue. It comprehends not only the titles of books, but also points out the places where they are kept, the age in which they were written, and the remarkable persons to whom they have belong'd: it takes up 310 pages in a large *folio* volume, tho' printed in a small character. To this is annex'd, a catalogue of northern books, transmitted by the famous *Periniskiold* from *Stockholm* to *Hickes*. Subsequent to this, we have six compleat indexes, which mightily illustrate the work; for which the author acknow-

ledges himself beholden to *William Brome*, of *Ewthington*, a person of great worth and fame.

As the learned Mr. *Wotton's* labour on this large and noble work is admirably well executed, and cannot but answer the intention of its author, by exciting a desire of enquiring into the northern languages and antiquities in the breasts of curious and inquisitive readers; so the additions which have been made thereto, and are to be found in this translation, cannot but encrease the value of the volume now before us, inasmuch as they contain several new and entertaining particulars. In the notes upon the *View of the Treasure of the old Northern Languages*, we meet with several useful remarks on the origin of the *Runic* letters, and a mighty diverting history of king *Cnut's* being exposed, while a child, in a wood, and receiving his name from the *Danish* word *Knude*; or, as the *High German* way of writing has it, *Knute*, a *Knot*; three gold rings being tied up in a knot on the infant's breast. To them are added, by way of testimony to what *Hickes* had observed as to wills, the testament of *Æthelflede*, duke *Æthelstan's* widow,

in *Saxon* and *English*, from the *Harley-Library*; as also the testament of ÆLFLEDE, or ÆGELFLEDE, the widow of duke BRIHTNOT, in the same manner, &c. There is also a letter from the famous *Leibnitz* to *Wotton*; the *Athanasian Creed*, in *Saxon* and *Eng-*

*lish*; and some other things of a like nature, which we have not room to enumerate.

From among these curious specimens of *Saxon* wills, &c. at the end of this work, it is hoped the selecting the following piece will be favourably received by our readers.

*The English Translation of King EDGAR's Charter.*

*By which he gave Ceorlesworth to ÆTHELFLEDE.*

*This Charter was copied from old parchments belonging to the Harley-Library; wherein, as in a treasury, are kept ten thousand Charters, disposed in the order of time.*

“THE kind maker of the universe having placed the highest and lowest things in a wonderful and an inexpressible order; created man of potter's clay, infusing into him a soul after his own similitude, and giving him authority over all things below, but one, which, on purpose to try him, he forbade him: he settled him very fairly with his wife in paradise; who, alas! by the instigation of the devil, being thrown out, brought upon himself and his posterity perpetual death in this miserable world. Wherefore I Edgar, governor and ruler

“ of all Britain, do freely  
“ give to a matron, whose  
“ name is Æthelflede, a certain parcel of land; to wit,  
“ seven manses in that place  
“ commonly called *Ceorles-*  
“ *wyrthe*, for ever; together  
“ with all things of right belonging to the same land,  
“ to wit, meadows, fields,  
“ pastures, woods; and, after her death, she may leave  
“ it to what heir she will:  
“ and I would have this place  
“ free from all earthly services, but three only; to  
“ wit, the accustomed (or  
“ usual) expedition to the  
“ wars, pontage, and castle-guard. But if any one attempts to alter this my donation, from the purport thereof,

“ thereof, may he be sepa-      “ my establishment. The  
 “ rated from the fellowship      “ bounds of this land are  
 “ (or society) of God’s holy      “ these, &c.  
 “ Church, and also from the      This charter was wrote and  
 “ Communion of the Faithful,      attested by these witnesses  
 “ unless he shall, before his      whose names are here under-  
 “ death, repent of what he      set, in the year of our Lord’s  
 “ has done amiss against this      Incarnation 962.

- ✠ I *Edgar*, king of *England*, have granted.
- ✠ I *Dunstan*, archbishop of *C.* corroborated.
- ✠ I *Osfeitel*, archbishop, have confirmed.
- ✠ I *Osulf*, bishop, have consolidated.
- ✠ I *Byrthelm*, bishop, have consented.
- ✠ I *Athelwold*, abbot.
- ✠ I *Ælfhere*, duke.
- ✠ I *Ælfbeah*, duke.
- ✠ I *Æthelstan*, duke.
- ✠ I *Æthelwold*, duke.
- ✠ I *Ælfgar*, M.
- ✠ I *Ælfwine*, M.
- ✠ I *Byrhtfertb*, M.
- ✠ I *Wulfhelm*, M.
- ✠ I *Æthelwine*, M.

N. B. *The Character at the beginning is the Banner-Cyher of CHRIST.*

## ARTICLE XXII.

*A VOYAGE to Abyssinia: by Father Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit. Containing a narrative of the dangers he underwent in his first attempt to pass from the Indies into Abyssinia; with a description of the coasts of the Red Sea. An account of the history, laws, customs, religion, habits, and buildings of the Abyssins; with the rivers, air, soil, birds, beasts, fruits, and other natural productions of that remote and unfrequented country. A relation of the admission of the Jesuits into Abyssinia in 1634. An exact description of the Nile; its head, its branches, the course of its water, and the cause of its inundations. With a continuation of the history of Abyssinia down to the eighteenth century; and fifteen dissertations on various Subjects relating to the history, antiquities, government, religion, manners, and natural history of Abyssinia, and other countries mention'd by father Jerome Lobo. By Mr. Le Grand. From the French. London; printed for A. Bettelworth and C. Hitch, at the Red Lyon in Pater-noster-Row. 1735. Octavo. Containing 396 pages, exclusive of the Preface and Table of Contents.*

THIS book, as appears from the title-page, is composed of the works of two authors; the one a Portuguese jesuit, the other a French gentleman; both writers of fair characters: and therefore it will not be amiss to enter a little into their distinguishing qualifications. The Portuguese traveller has not prejudic'd his readers, either against his vocation or country, by introducing romantick stories or incredible fictions into his relation: whatever he relates is at least probable; and therefore his accounts have a right to

our belief, till a better authority than his shall contradict them. In his account of the *Mission*, he neither exaggerates the merits of the jesuits, nor aggravates the vices of the *Abyssins*: so that even, on the nicest topics, he affords us no just grounds of suspicion, as too many writers of this kind have done, on the face of their own works. The discourses of M. *Le Grand* are learned, ingenious, and, considering the Church of which he is a member, moderate and impartial. As to the translator's part, he acknowledges

ledges his having taken great liberties with the originals. In the first part of father *Jerome Lobo's* relations, which contains an account of what befell him and his companions to the time of their arrival in *Abyssinia*, it is confess'd, that the *English* performance is rather an epitome than a translation. In the account of *Abyssinia*, and the continuation thereof, the translation is closer; and in the dissertations closest of all. This may serve for a general account of the piece before us. Let us now examine it more particularly.

Father *Jerome Lobo* embark'd in 1622, in the same fleet with the count *Vidigueira*, on whom the king of *Portugal* had confer'd the viceroyship of the *Indies*; on the 16th of *Dec.* following they arrived at *Goa*; and, on the 26th of *January* 1624, he set out for *Abyssinia*: which mission he knew before-hand was extremely dangerous; and indeed two of the fathers, appointed at the same time with himself, were murder'd in their attempt to get into that empire. Our author had better fate; and, after undergoing great toils, got safely into that so much talk'd-of, and so little known country: of which a concise description

cannot but be proper in this place.

The empire of *Abyssinia* hath been one of the largest which history gives us an account of. It extended formerly from the *Red* sea to the kingdom of *Congo*, and from *Egypt* to the *Indian* sea. It is not long since it contained forty provinces; but is not now much bigger than all *Spain*, and consists but of five kingdoms and six provinces; of which part is entirely subject to the emperor, and part only pays him some tribute, or acknowledgment of dependance, either voluntarily, or by compulsion. Some of these are of very large extent. The kingdoms of *Tigre*, *Bagameder*, and *Goiama*, are as big as *Portugal*, or bigger: *Ambara* and *Damote* are something less. The provinces are inhabited by *Moors*, *Pagans*, *Jews*, and *Christians*; the last is the reigning and establish'd religion. This diversity of people and religion is the reason that the kingdom, in different parts, is under different forms of government; and that their laws and customs are extremely various.

The inhabitants of the kingdom of *Ambara* are the most civiliz'd and polite; and next to them the natives of *Tigre*, or the true *Abyssins*. The rest,  
except

except the *Damotes*, the *Gafates*, and the *Agaus*, which approach somewhat nearer to civility, are entirely rude and barbarous. Among these nations the *Galles*, who first alarm'd the world in 1542, have remarkably distinguish'd themselves, by the ravages they have committed, and the terror they have rais'd in this part of *Africa*. They neither sow their lands, nor improve them by any kind of culture; but, living upon milk and flesh, encamp like the *Arabs*, without any settled habitation. They practise no rites of worship; though they believe, that, in the regions above, there dwells a Being that governs the world: whether by this being they mean the sun or the sky, is not known; or indeed whether they have not some conception of the God that created them. This Deity they call, in their language, *Oul*. In other matters they are yet more ignorant; and have some customs so contrary even to the laws of nature, as might almost afford reason to doubt, whether they are endued with reason. The christianity profess'd by the *Abyssins* is so corrupted with superstitious errors and heresies, and so mingled with ceremonies borrow'd from the *Jews*, that little besides the

name of Christianity is to be found here; and the thorn may be said to have choak'd the grain. This proceeds, in a great measure, from the diversity of religions which are tolerated there, either by negligence, or from motives of policy; and the same cause hath produced such various revolutions, revolts, and civil wars within these latter ages: for those different sects do not easily admit of an union with each other, or a quiet subjection to the same monarch. The *Abyssins* cannot properly be said to have either cities or houses; they live either in tents, or cottages made of straw and clay; for they very rarely build with stone. Their villages or towns consist of these huts; yet even of such villages they have but few, because the grandees, the viceroys, and the emperor himself are always in the camp, that they may be prepared, upon the most sudden summons, to go where the exigence of affairs demands their presence: and this precaution is no more than necessary for a prince every year engaged either in foreign wars, or intestine commotions.

These towns have each a governor, whom they call *Gadare*; over whom is the *Educ*, or lieutenant; and both are

accountable to an officer, called the *Afamacon*, or mouth of the king, because he receives the revenues, which he pays into the hands of the *Relatina-fala*, or grand master of the household. Sometimes the emperor creates a *Ratz*, or viceroy-general, over all the empire, which is superior to all his other officers.

*Ethiopia* produces very near the same kinds of provisions as *Portugal*; tho', by the extreme laziness of the inhabitants, in a much less quantity. However, there are some roots, herbs, and fruits, which grow there much better than in other places. What the ancients imagined, of the *Torrid Zone* being uninhabitable, is so far from being true, that this climate is very temperate: the heats indeed are excessive in *Congo* and *Monomotapa*; but in *Abyssinia* they have a perpetual spring, more delicious and charming than that in *Portugal*. The *Blacks* here are not ugly like those of the adjacent kingdoms, but have better features; and are not without wit and delicacy: their apprehension is quick, and their judgment sound. They have here two harvests in the year, which is a sufficient recompence for the small produce of each: one

harvest they have in the winter, which lasts through the months of *July*, *August*, and *September*; the other in spring. Their trees are always green, and it is the fault of the inhabitants that they produce so little fruit. They have, in the greatest plenty, raisins, peaches, four pomegranates, and sugar-canes, and some figs. Most of these are ripe about *Lent*, which the *Abyssinians* keep with great strictness.

Among the animals of *Ethiopia*, the lion claims the first place, particularly a kind of lion, of extraordinary size, called the *Lion Royal*; one of which being killed by his servant, our author had the curiosity to measure, and found him twelve feet between the head and tail. The elephants are prodigiously numerous in that empire: our author met once with three hundred of them in one evening; and some of them are of such an enormous bigness, that a man, mounted on a high mule, cannot reach within two spans of the top of its back. The rhinoceros also, the mortal enemy of the elephant, is found in the same region; where our author had the glimpse of a unicorn, which, he tells us, resembled a fine-shaped horse, of a bay colour, with a long black tail. The  
horses

horses here are excellent, and their mules, oxen and cows without number: they have a particular custom, which is the result of this plenty, *viz.* that every man, who has a thousand cows, saves, once a year, a day's milk, with which makes a *Bath* for his friends, and entertains them at a great feast: so that, to give one an idea of a person's circumstances, their common expression is, *He bathes so many times a year*; which is equivalent to saying he has so many thousand cows. The king's tribute out of cattle is one cow out of ten, every three years. The cookery of the *Abyssins*, generally speaking, is enough to turn an *European's* stomach; every thing they dress swimming with butter, except their grand rarity, which is raw beef, eaten with pepper, salt, and the gall of the ox; or, which is esteem'd the richer sauce, with what is taken out of his guts. Their drink is generally mead and beer; and it is thought a point of ill manners amongst them, to let a stranger go away sober. Their dress is becoming enough, and people of quality run into excess in order to adorn their persons. Their women are not over-chaste; and their marriages, according to our author, so very loose, that

they part when ever they find they cannot live agreeably together. Their males marry about ten years old, and their females younger. Strangers live in no country in the world so well and so easily as in this; for when a stranger comes to a *village*, or to a *camp*, the people are obliged to entertain him and his company, according to his rank. As soon as he enters an house (for they have no inns in this nation) the master informs his neighbours that he hath a guest: immediately they bring in bread, and all kinds of provisions; and there is great care taken to provide enough, because, if the guest complains, the town is obliged to pay double the value of what they ought to have furnish'd. The want of money in *Abyssinia* (for, excepting the eastern provinces, there is none in the empire, and even in them they have only an iron coin) is countervailed by the old method of exchanging one commodity for another: however, salt is a kind of common measure in this country; and is, in truth, their money. As to controversies, civil or criminal, they are easily and speedily decided: the two parties make choice of a judge, and plead their own cause before him; and, if they cannot agree

agree in their choice, the governor of the place appoints them one; from whom there lies an appeal to the viceroy, and to the emperor himself. All causes are determined on the spot; no writings are produced; the judge sits down on the ground, in the midst of the high road, where all that pass may be present: the two persons concern'd stand before him, with their friends about them, who serve as their attornies: the plaintiff speaks first; the defendant answers him; each is permitted to rejoin three or four times: then silence is commanded, and the judge takes the opinions of those that are about him: if the evidence be deem'd sufficient, he pronounces sentence; which, in some cases, is decisive, and without appeal: he then takes the criminal into custody till he hath made satisfaction; but if it be a crime punishable with death, he is deliver'd over to the prosecutor, who may put him to death at his own discretion. As to the religion of the *Abyssins*, it is, according to father *Lobo*, a confused miscellany of *Jewish* and *Mahometan* superstitions; with which they have corrupted those remains of Christianity which they still retain. The Passion of our LORD they celebrate with

great piety: they reverence the Cross, pay great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to Angels and Saints: they observe festivals, and keep *Sunday* strictly: they are very devout in the exercise of their publick worship; and in their charity to the poor they exceed the bounds of prudence: the severity of their fasts is very great; in *Lent* they eat not till after sun-set; they abstain from milk and butter; and, as their country affords no fish, they are obliged to subsist on roots and pulse: on fasts they never drink but when they eat; and their priests never communicate till the evening: excommunication is extremely dreaded here; and, in consequence thereof, the clergy tyrannize over the people: no country in the world abounds so much as this with churches, monasteries, and ecclesiasticks; so that it is not possible to sing in one church or monastery without being heard by another; perhaps by several: they have some peculiar notions about *purgatory*, the *creation* of souls, and other things of *mysterious* nature; they repeat *baptism* annually, practise *circumcision*, observe the *sabbath*, and abstain from those *kinds of flesh* forbidden by the *law*; brothers espouse brothers

thers widows; and, in a word, many *Jewish* ceremonies are strictly adhered to among them: the words of baptism they have changed, and have inserted a great many whimsical fables in their kalendar. In a word, the *Abyssins* in general are very ignorant and superstitious.

Hitherto this abstract hath been pretty regular; but as the other circumstances, relating to this country and its inhabitants, are interspersed among the adventures of the author (father *Lobo*) it will not be amiss to collect a few of the most remarkable, in order to render this account more clear and perfect; which will at the same time contribute to the giving a distinct idea of the nature and usefulness of the work itself. The winters in *Abyssinia* are extremely uncomfortable and pernicious: they begin in *May*, but their greatest rigour is from the middle of *June* to the middle of *September*: the rains fall at that time almost incessantly, occasioning not only great floods, but raising also such noxious vapours, as render the climate very unwholesome: the morning is generally fair and bright, but about noon, or two hours after, the sky is clouded, and immediately succeeds a violent storm,

with thunder, and lightening flashing in a most dreadful manner. While this lasts, which is commonly three or four hours, none go out of doors: the ploughman, upon the first appearance of it, unyokes his oxen, and betakes himself with them into covert: travellers provide for their security in the neighbouring villages, or set up their tents; every body flies to some shelter, as well to avoid the unwholesomeness, as the violence of the rain: the thunder is astonishing, and the lightning often destroys. Our author had a terrible instance of its force. "It once flash'd so  
"near me (says he) that I  
"felt an uneasiness on that  
"side for a long time after:  
"at the same time it killed  
"three young children; and,  
"having run round my room,  
"went out and killed a man  
"and a woman three hundred paces off." When the storm is over, the sun shines out again; and, but for its effects, it would scarce be thought it had rained. Such is the *Abyssinian* winter; a dreadful season, in which the whole kingdom languishes with numberless diseases and affliction; which, however grievous, is equal'd by the clouds of grasshoppers, which fly in such numbers from the  
desert,

desart, that the sun is hid and the sky darken'd. Whenever this plague appears, nothing is seen throughout the whole region, but the most ghastly consternation; or heard, but the most piercing lamentations: for wherever they fall, that unhappy place is laid waste and ruined; they leave not one blade of grass, nor any hopes of a harvest. The inclemency of the winter, and the plague of grasshoppers, our author acquaints us, are not the only evils to which strangers are exposed in *Abyssinia*. He gives us an instance of a misfortune which happen'd to himself, sufficient to convince us that venomous creatures have different powers in different climates. These are his words: "In crossing a desert, two days journey over, I was in great danger of my life; for, as I lay on the ground, I perceived myself seiz'd with a pain, which forced me to rise; and I saw, about four yards from me, one of those serpents that dart their poison at a distance. Altho' I rose before he came very near me, I yet felt the effects of his poisonous breath; and, if I had lain a little longer, had certainly died. I had recourse to *Bezoar*, a sovereign remedy against these

"poisons, which I always carried about me. These serpents are not long, but have a body short and thick, and their bellies speckled with brown, black and yellow: they have a wide mouth, with which they draw in a great quantity of air; and, having retained it some time, eject it with such force, that they kill at four yards distance: I only escap'd by being somewhat farther from him."

The *Nile*, which has furnish'd so much occasion for controversy, is very fully discoursed of, and all the wonders relating to it set in the clearest light, by father *Lobo*, who speaks of these matters from his own knowledge; and therefore his relation deserves both attention and credit: an abridgment of what he has deliver'd on that subject cannot prove unentertaining. This mighty river is called by the natives *Abavi*; i. e. *The father of waters*. It rises in *Sacola*, a province of the kingdom of *Goiama*, one of the most fruitful and agreeable in all the *Abyssinian* dominions: it is inhabited by the nation of the *Agas*, who are Christians only in name, having, as we shall see presently, adopted the most barbarous rites, and the grossest and most

most superstitious practices in  
paganism. On the declivity of  
a mountain, in the eastern part  
of this kingdom, is the source  
of the *Nile* discover'd. "This  
" spring, or rather these two  
" springs, are two holes, each  
" about two feet diameter, a  
" stone's cast distant from  
" each other: the one is but  
" about five feet and an half  
" in depth; at least we could  
" not get our line farther;  
" perhaps because it was stopt  
" by roots, for the whole  
" place is full of trees: of  
" the other, which is some-  
" what less, with a line of  
" ten feet we could find no  
" bottom; and were assured  
" by the inhabitants, that  
" none ever had been found.  
" 'Tis believed here, that  
" these springs are the vents  
" of a great subterraneous  
" lake; and they have this  
" circumstance to favour their  
" opinion, that the ground is  
" always moist, and so soft,  
" that the water boils up un-  
" der foot, as one walks up-  
" on it: this is more visible  
" after rains; for then the  
" ground round about these  
" fountains yields and sinks  
" so much, that I believe it  
" is chiefly supported by the  
" roots of trees that are in-  
" terwoven one with another.  
" At a little distance to the  
" south is a village named

" *Gnix*, through which the  
" way lies to the top of the  
" mountain; from whence  
" the traveller discovers a vast  
" extent of land, which ap-  
" pears like a deep valley,  
" though the mountain rises  
" so imperceptibly, that those  
" who go up or down it are  
" scarce sensible of any de-  
" clivity."

On the top of this mountain  
is a little hill, which the ido-  
latrous *Agans* have in great  
veneration; their priest calls  
them together at this place  
once a year; and, having sa-  
crificed a *cow*, throws the head  
into one of the springs of the  
*Nile*: after which ceremony,  
every one sacrifices a *cow*, or  
more, according to their dif-  
ferent degrees of wealth or de-  
votion. The bones of these  
*cows* have already form'd two  
mountains of considerable  
height; which afford a suffi-  
cient proof that these nations  
have always paid their adora-  
tion to this famous river. As  
to the course of the *Nile*, its  
waters, after the first rise, run  
to the eastward for about a  
musket-shot; then turning to  
the north, continue hidden in  
the grass and weeds for about  
a quarter of a league, and dis-  
cover themselves for the first  
time among some rocks: a  
sight not to be enjoy'd with-  
out some pleasure by those who  
have

have read the fabulous account of this stream deliver'd by the ancients, and the vain conjectures and reasonings which have been form'd upon its original, the nature of its waters, its cataracts, and its inundations: all which we are now entirely acquainted with, and eye-witnesses of.

The *Nile* rowls away from its source with so inconsiderable a current, that it appears unlikely to escape being dried up by the hot season; but soon receiving an increase from the *Gemma*, the *Keltu*, the *Branfu*, and other rivers, it is of such a breadth in the plain of *Boad*, which is not above three days journey from its source, that a ball shot from a musket will scarce fly from one bank to another. Here it begins to run northwards, deflecting however a little towards the east, for the space of nine or ten leagues; and then enters the so much talk'd-of lake of *Dambia*; it is called by the natives *Barbar-sena*, the resemblance of the sea; or *Barbar-dambia*, the sea of *Dambia*. It crosses this lake only at one end, with so violent a rapidity, that the waters of the *Nile* may be distinguish'd thro' all the passage, which is six leagues.

“ Here (says our author)  
“ begins the greatness of the

“ *Nile*: fifteen miles farther,  
“ in the land of *Alata*, it  
“ rushes precipitately from  
“ the top of a rock, and  
“ forms one of the most  
“ beautiful water-falls in the  
“ world: I pass'd under it  
“ without being wet; and,  
“ resting myself there for the  
“ sake of the coolness, was  
“ charm'd with a thousand  
“ delightful rainbows, which  
“ the sun-beams painted on  
“ the water in all their shining  
“ and lively colours. The  
“ fall of this mighty stream,  
“ from so great an height,  
“ makes a noise that may be  
“ heard to a considerable dis-  
“ tance: but I could not ob-  
“ serve, that the neighbour-  
“ ing inhabitants were at all  
“ deaf; I convers'd with se-  
“ veral, and was as easily  
“ heard by them, as I heard  
“ them. The mist that rises  
“ from this fall of water may  
“ be seen much farther than  
“ the noise can be heard.  
“ After this cataract, the *Nile*  
“ again collects its scatter'd  
“ stream among the rocks,  
“ which seem to be disjoin'd  
“ in this place only to afford  
“ it a passage. They are so  
“ near each other, that, in  
“ my time, a bridge of beams,  
“ on which the whole impe-  
“ rial army pass'd, was laid  
“ over the *Nile*. *Sultan Seg-*  
“ *ned* hath since built a bridge

“ of

“ of one arch in the same  
 “ place; for which purpose  
 “ he procured masons from  
 “ India. This bridge, which  
 “ is the first the *Abyssins* have  
 “ seen on the *Nile*, very much  
 “ facilitates a communication  
 “ between the provinces, and  
 “ encourages commerce a-  
 “ mong the inhabitants of his  
 “ empire.

Here the river alters its  
 course, and passes through  
 many various kingdoms: on  
 the east it leaves *Begmeder*, or  
 the land of sheep, so called  
 from the great numbers that  
 are bred there; *Beg* in that  
 language signifying sheep, and  
*Meder* a country: it then wa-  
 ters the kingdoms of *Ambara*,  
*Olaca*, *Choa* and *Damot*, which  
 lie on the left side; and the  
 kingdom of *Goiama*, which it  
 bounds on the right; form-  
 ing, by its windings, a kind  
 of peninsula: then entering  
*Bezamo*, a province of the  
 kingdom of *Damot*, and *Ga-  
 marcausa*, part of *Goiama*, it  
 returns within a short day's  
 journey; though, to pursue it  
 through all its mazes, and ac-  
 company it round the king-  
 dom of *Goiama*, is a journey  
 of twenty-nine days. So far,  
 and a few days journey far-  
 ther, this river confines itself  
 to *Abyssinia*; and then passes  
 into the bordering countries of  
*Faculo* and *Ombarca*. These

vast regions we have little  
 knowledge of: they are in-  
 habited by nations entirely dif-  
 ferent from the *Abyssins*; their  
 hair is like that of the other  
*Blacks*, short and curl'd. In  
 the year 1615, *Rassela Chris-  
 tos*, lieutenant-general to *Sul-  
 tan Segued*, enter'd those king-  
 doms, with his army, in an  
 hostile manner; but, being  
 able to get no intelligence of  
 the condition of the people, and  
 astonish'd at their unbounded  
 extent, he return'd, without  
 daring to attempt any thing.

“ As the empire of the  
 “ *Abyssins* (says our author)  
 “ terminates at these desarts,  
 “ and as I follow'd the course  
 “ of the *Nile* no farther, I  
 “ here leave it to range over  
 “ barbarous kingdoms, and  
 “ convey wealth and plenty  
 “ into *Egypt*, which owes to  
 “ the annual inundations of  
 “ this river its envy'd fertility.  
 “ I know not any thing of the  
 “ rest of its passage, but that  
 “ it receives great increases  
 “ from many other rivers;  
 “ that it has several cataracts  
 “ like the first already de-  
 “ scribed; and that few fish  
 “ are to be found in it, which  
 “ scarcity doubtless is to be  
 “ attributed to the *River-  
 horses* and *Crocodiles*, which  
 “ destroy the weaker inhabi-  
 “ tants of these waters; and  
 “ something may be allow'd

“ to the cataracts, it being  
 “ difficult for fish to fall so  
 “ far without being kill’d.”

As to the causes of the inundations of the *Nile*, our author discourses thus: “ I cannot help suspending my  
 “ narration to reflect a little  
 “ on the ridiculous speculations of those swelling philosophers, whose arrogance  
 “ would prescribe laws to nature, and subject those astonishing effects which we  
 “ behold daily, to their idle reasonings, and chimerical  
 “ rules: presumptuous imaginations, that have given  
 “ being to such numbers of  
 “ books, and patrons to so  
 “ many various opinions about the overflows of the  
 “ *Nile*. Some of these theorists have been pleased to  
 “ declare it as their favourite  
 “ notion, that this inundation  
 “ is caused by high winds,  
 “ which stop the current, and  
 “ so force the water to rise  
 “ above its banks, and spread  
 “ over all *Egypt*. Others pretend, a subterraneous communication between the  
 “ *Ocean* and the *Nile*; and  
 “ that the sea, being violently agitated, swells the river. Many have imagined  
 “ themselves blest’d with the  
 “ discovery, when they have  
 “ told us, that this mighty  
 “ flood proceeds from the

“ melting of snow on the  
 “ mountains of *Ethiopia*:  
 “ without reflecting that this  
 “ opinion is contrary to the  
 “ received notion of all the  
 “ ancients, who believed that  
 “ the heat was so excessive  
 “ between the tropics, that  
 “ no inhabitant could live  
 “ there. So much snow, and  
 “ so great heat, are never  
 “ met with in the same region: and, indeed, I never  
 “ saw snow in *Abyssinia*, except on mount *Semen*, in  
 “ the kingdom of *Tigre*, very  
 “ remote from the *Nile*; and  
 “ on *Namera*, which is indeed not far distant: but  
 “ where there never falls snow  
 “ sufficient to wet the foot  
 “ of the mountain when it is  
 “ melted. To the immense  
 “ labours of the *Portuguese*,  
 “ mankind is indebted for  
 “ the knowledge of the real  
 “ cause of these inundations,  
 “ so great and so regular.  
 “ Their observations inform  
 “ us, that *Abyssinia*, where  
 “ the *Nile* rises, and waters  
 “ vast tracts of land, is full  
 “ of mountains, and, in its natural situation, much higher  
 “ than *Egypt*; that all the  
 “ winter, from *June* to *September*, no day is without  
 “ rain; that the *Nile* receives  
 “ in its course all the rivers,  
 “ brooks and torrents which  
 “ fall from those mountains:

“ these

“ these necessarily swell it  
 “ above the banks, and fill  
 “ the plains of *Egypt* with  
 “ the inundations. This  
 “ comes regularly about the  
 “ month of *July*, or three  
 “ weeks after the beginning  
 “ of the rainy season in *Ethio-*  
 “ *pia*. The different degrees  
 “ of this flood are such cer-  
 “ tain indications of the fruit-  
 “ fulness or sterility of the  
 “ ensuing year, that it is  
 “ publickly proclaim’d in  
 “ *Cairo* how much the wa-  
 “ ter hath gain’d each night.  
 “ This is all I have to in-  
 “ form the reader of concern-  
 “ ing the *Nile*, which the  
 “ *Egyptians* adored as the  
 “ Deity, in whose choice it  
 “ was to bless them with  
 “ abundance, or deprive them  
 “ of the necessaries of life.”

Father *Lobo* gives us a co-  
 pious account of the progress  
 of the catholick religion to  
 the time of the expulsion of  
 the *Jesuits*, which happen’d  
 on the death of *Sultan Segued*.  
*M. Le Grand* has added a  
 very curious sequel to this  
 history; wherein we are in-  
 form’d of the many fruitless  
 attempts which have been  
 made to introduce again the  
*Jesuit* missionaries into the  
*Abyssinian* empire, in order to  
 bring the emperor and his  
 subjects under obedience to the  
 see of *Rome*. Which relati-

ons cannot fail of affording  
 both profit and pleasure to a  
 considerate reader, inasmuch  
 as they clearly point out the  
 various methods by which the  
 Christian religion is made the  
 tool of power, and a pretence  
 for butchering mens bodies,  
 under colour of taking care  
 of their souls; furnishing us  
 at the same time with some  
 examples of persons warm  
 with a laudable zeal for the  
 service of God, and a disinte-  
 rested concern for the salva-  
 tion of his creatures, who, in  
 spite of the greatest dangers,  
 and in the midst of the most  
 uneasy hardships, labour in-  
 cessantly to bring men to the  
 knowledge of the gospel, and  
 in every other respect to fulfil  
 the painful duties of their cal-  
 ling.

Various points in the *Abyss-*  
*inian* history remaining, after  
 all this, not a little obscure,  
*M. Le Grand*, in order to the  
 full gratification of his reader,  
 hath annex’d fifteen dissertati-  
 ons on the most curious and  
 important subjects, which had  
 been but slightly touch’d in  
 the foregoing pages. In these  
 discourses we meet with a great  
 deal of learning, and a mul-  
 titude of proper quotations,  
 from ancient and modern au-  
 thors, wrought into so easy  
 and natural a method, that we  
 find ourselves masters of many  
 difficult

difficult and abstruse topics, without being sensible of any trouble in acquiring that knowledge; which, under another master, could not have been obtain'd without much fatigue.

After so ample a commendation, it may not be amiss to add the titles of these dissertations; they therefore follow:

1. *Upon Mr. Ludolf's history of Abyssinia.*
2. *Upon Ethiopia, or Abyssinia.*
3. *Upon the Nile, and on the eastern side of Africa, from Melinda to the streight of Babelmandel.*
4. *On Prester John.*
5. *On the kings of Abyssinia; their coronations, titles, queens, and sons: of their armies, and the manner of distributing justice.*
6. *On the Red-Sea, and the navigation of Solomon's fleets.*
7. *On the queen of Sheba.*
8. *Upon circumcision.*
9. *On the conversion of the Abyssins.*
10. *On the errors of the Abyssins relating to the incarnation.*
11. *Concerning the sacraments, particularly those of baptism and confirmation.*
12. *On the eucharist and penance.*
13. *On extreme unction, ordination and marriage.*
14. *On the invocation of saints, miracles, prayers for the dead, fasts, images, and reliques.*
15. *On the hierarchy, or government of the Church of Ethiopia.*

Having taken the pains to compare this translation with

the original, and finding that no notice is taken of the preface which M. *Le Grand* prefix'd to his work, and which contains several passages very proper to be communicated to the learned world, it seemed not at all repugnant to the design of this journal, to add, by way of appendix, some extracts from that preface, which consists of 14 quarto pages. Our author tells us, that the negotiations between *France* and *Portugal* not being very brisk during the five years that he was secretary to the abbé d'*Estrées* at the court of *Lisbon*, he thought he could not employ his time better than in collecting such relations of the *Portuguese* conquest, and other transactions in the *Indies*, as had not hitherto been made public. Don *Louis d'Acunha*, understanding his design, put into his hands that account of the island of *Ceylan* which he has since publish'd. He bought of a poor widow a great number of manuscripts, which were written by father *Damian Vieyra*, a Jesuit, who had been forty years in the *Indies*, and who had convers'd very much with the *Bramins*. In these papers M. *Le Grand* found abundance of curious particulars relating to the lives of *Aurengzeb*, the *Emir Gemla*, and the famous

*Sevagi*.

*Seuagi*. The marquis *de Fontes*, who had been ambassador at *Rome*, favour'd him with a very large manuscript relating to the discovery of the *Indies*; in which he found an infinite number of remarkable things which *J. de Barros* either pass'd by, or which totally escaped his knowledge. But, amongst all the persons of distinction in *Portugal*, who were so kind to lend their assistance to our author, the late coun-  
tels of *Ericeira*, and the count of *Ericeira* her son, did him the greatest favours; for they permitted him to examine the noble library belonging to their family, and to take whatever he found there worthy his notice. It was in consequence of this favour that he found three volumes in *folio*, containing the history of *Congo*, *Angola*, and *Benguela*; written upon the spot, and comprising the whole reign of that noble heroine *Jinga*, queen of *Matamba*, whose actions deserve better to be known than the fabulous accounts, of *Penthesilea*, *Thalestris*, *Hippolita*, and the other warlike *Amazons* recorded by writers of antiquity. This princess, finding herself incommoded by the *Portuguese*, who had over-run a great part of her dominions, had recourse to the *Dutch* for assistance; and, by

their help, drove the former nation almost out of *Angola*: but, perceiving in time that the *Dutch* were not like to prove better neighbours, she join'd with the *Portuguese* against them; and having, partly by force, partly by intrigues, revenged herself of all her enemies, subdued the *Giangas*, and made herself sole mistress of a kingdom, four hundred leagues in extent, in the middle of *Africa*; she died a Christian, in the year 1660, or 61, upwards of fourscore. Our author next informs us, how he came by the manuscript of father *Lobo*, which was presented him by the count *de Ericeira*, when he had lost all hopes of finding it. It was Mr. *Thevenot* who gave him the first intelligence of these travels, of which he imagined he himself had publish'd a part in his collection of voyages; but he was mistaken, for what he publish'd was no more than an extract of some discourses between the *English* envoy Mr. *Toinard* and father *Lobo*. He next acquaints us, in few words, with the misfortunes which beset that indefatigable missionary after his unsuccessful expedition into *Ethiopia*.

Sailing from *Goa*, with an intent to get, if possible, into *Portugal*, he was shipwreck'd  
on

on a desert coast, where he and his companions were oblig'd to remain seven months; in which time they built two shallops, and in them they embark'd themselves, in hopes of getting, some way or other, into *Europe*: one of these little vessels was swallow'd up in the sea, with all that was in her; the other, on board which was father *Lobo*, after forty days terrible fatigue, doubled the cape of *Good Hope*, and arrived in *Angola*. Some time after, he embark'd with the viceroy for *Brasil*: on that coast the vessel he was in was taken by a *Dutch* frigate, the captain of which very inhumanly exposed all his prisoners on a barren island, many of whom died for want; the rest, among whom was our missionary, were taken off by some barques which happen'd to touch at the island, and carried to the continent; cross which, sick and weak as he was, father *Lobo* travelled on foot to *Cartagena*, where the *Jesuits* have a house; and, having refresh'd himself there a fortnight, he once more ship'd himself for *Europe*; and, having suffer'd a terrible storm near cape *St. Vincent*, he arrived safe in

*Spain*; from whence he travelled into *Portugal*, and afterwards, on the affairs of the mission, to *Rome*, where he met with unexpected crosses and disappointments: yet neither these, nor all the dreadful evils he had undergone, could quench the fervor of his zeal; prompted by which he went again into the *Indies*, where he became rector of the *Jesuits* house at *Goa*, and afterwards provincial: at length, he return'd to *Lisbon*, the place of his birth, and died at the house of *St. Roche*, the 29th of *Jan.* 1678, being then about fourscore and five years old. Father *Tellez*, in his elogium of our author *Lobo*, says, that he travelled upwards of thirty-eight thousand leagues, merely to gain souls to God, and to carry the light of the gospel into the most distant parts of the world. *M. Le Grand* speaks next of the authorities produced in his own dissertations, and vouches for the authentickness of the original pieces added by way of appendix to his book; but, as these paragraphs contain nothing in them either curious or entertaining, we will not trouble our readers any farther with their contents.

## ARTICLE XXIII.

*An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of HOMER.* London; printed in the year M D C C X X V. Octavo. Containing 335 pages, exclusive of a very long Index, Table of Prints, and Errata, making in all 80 pages.

There are some books, of which it is easy to give a regular abstract, and to afford the reader a contracted view at least of their whole contents; but the work before us is by no means of this nature. The author has bestow'd a great deal of pains and learning in discoursing on a subject which will ever be thought worthy of attention, while good sense and true taste remain in the world. In order to set this elegant performance in the best light, which the compass of our journal will allow, we shall first give a general account of the manner in which his design is executed, and afterwards enter more particularly into its several parts. The whole then is an epistolary dissertation, address'd to the right honourable my lord \*\*\*, who is generally understood to be the earl of J\*\*\*, and the intent of it is, the solution of a question which hitherto, it seems, his lordship thought unresolved, viz. "By what

" it has happen'd, that none  
 " have equalled him in *Epic*  
 " *Poetry* for two thousand  
 " seven hundred years, the  
 " time since he wrote; nor  
 " any, that we know, ever  
 " surpass'd him before." In discussing of this intricate point, our author has, with great art, avoided that pedantical, dry, unpleasant method of mixing quotations in foreign languages, and frequent citations of ancient and modern authors, in the current of his discourse; and yet, as it would have been impossible to have satisfy'd the critics of the truth of his observations, if no such authorities had been produced, he has thrown them almost entirely into the notes: so that the *English* reader may peruse, without interruption, a pleasant and instructive lecture on a curious and noble subject; and the more learned and inquisitive reader may, if he pleases, have recourse to the originals, whence matters of fact and matters of opinion are drawn; whereby the capacity and sincerity of the au-

Y

thor

thor may be discerned, and consequently the value of his work be known with certainty. It is divided into twelve sections, each of which is adorn'd at the beginning with a beautiful print, by way of head-piece, all of them finely design'd and executed. That nothing might be wanting to render so miscellaneous a work as this perfectly intelligible, there is at the end a map of ancient *Greece*, and of the countries known to the *Greeks*; with a very copious index. To come now to particulars:

In the first section of his work, our author takes notice, that the ancients very easily resolve that question he has undertaken to examine, by an implicit belief that *Homer* was *inspired*. But this, however readily receiv'd, and firmly credited in those days, will not serve for an answer in these; and therefore he thinks it perfectly harmless to assert, that *Homer's* poems are of *human composition*; inspired by no other power than his own natural faculties, and the chances of his education: in a word, that a *concourse* of *natural* causes conspired to produce and cultivate that mighty genius, and gave him the noblest field to exercise it in, that ever fell to the share of a poet. In pursuance of this

maxim, he resolves to enquire into the genius and education of *Homer*, and to follow the dark hints afforded us by antiquity, in order to find out how a blind strolling bard could come by them. In this search, it first occurs, that he is generally reputed to have been a native of *Asia the less*; a tract of ground that, for the temperature of the *climate* and qualities of the *soil*, may vie with any in *Europe*. It is not so fat and fruitful as the plains of *Babylon*, or the banks of the *Nile*, to effeminate the inhabitants, and beget laziness and inactivity; but the purity and benignity of the air, the varieties of the fruits and fields, the beauty and number of the rivers, and the constant gales from the happy isles of the western sea, *all conspire* to bring its productions of every kind to the highest perfection: they inspire that mildness of temper and flow of fancy which favour the most extensive views, and give the finest conceptions of *nature* and *truth*. The truth of this observation he supports by a long note from *Hippocrates*, and a short one from *Plato*. The matter of fact he verifies by a multitude of instances: he then proceeds to the effects of education; and concludes this section with a short recapitulation

tion of the principal ingredients which form the various dispositions of men. "First, " *the state of the country* where " a person is born and bred, " in which I include the com- " mon *manners* of the inha- " bitants ; their *constitution*, " civil and religious, with its " *causes* and *consequences* ; " their *manners* are seen in " the *ordinary* way of living, " as it happens to be polite " or barbarous, luxurious or " simple. Next, the *man- " ners* of the *times*, or the " prevalent humours or pro- " fessions in vogue. These " two are publick, and have " a common effect on the " whole generation. Of a " more confined nature is the " first *private education* ; and, " after that, *the particular " way of life* we choose and " pursue with our *fortunes* in " it. From these accidents, " *My Lord*, men in every " country may be justly said " to draw their character, " and derive their manners : " they make us *what we are*, " in so far as they reach our " sentiments, and give us a " peculiar turn and appear- " ance : a change in any one " of them makes an altera- " tion upon us ; and, taken " together, we must consider " them as the moulds that " form us into those habits

" and dispositions, which sway " our conduct, and distinguish " our actions."

Our author opens his 2d sec- tion with observing, that there is, and has been, in all ages and nations, a *progression of man- ners*, depending chiefly on our *fortunes*, rising and sinking in proportion with them. In re- spect to those of ancient *Greece*, he says, we may dis- tinguish three periods : the *first*, from the dark ages, of which they had little or no knowledge, to the time of the *Trojan* war : the *second*, from the taking of *Troy* to the *Per- sian* invasion under *Xerxes* : the *third*, from that time to the loss of their liberty, first by the *Macedonians*, and then by the *Romans*. *Greece* was peopled in the first ; she grew, and the *constitution* was settled in the second ; *she en- joy'd* it in the third, and was in all her glory. From the two *first* periods *Homer* drew his *imagery* and *manners*, learned his *language*, and took his *subject* ; which makes it necessary for us to review them. *Greece*, in general, is but a rough country ; tho', here and there, it may boast some pleasant spots ; of old it was but thinly inhabited, and those inhabitants were ex- posed to the greatest hard- ships, involved in continual

wars, which constrained them to frequent removals, and consequently gave them no encouragements to build any other than homely dwellings, or to provide themselves with any more than the necessities of life. At sea, war raged as universally as at land ; for, as soon as they made use of ships, they employ'd them in piracy ; and, in short, theft was not thought dishonourable, when accompanied with force ; on the contrary, successful rapine was the surest road to reputation. Such was the manners of the ancient *Greeks*, and such they are represented by *Homer* : but even these evils were productive of good ; for the fear of being subdued taught the inhabitants, when they were numerous enough, to fortify their cities ; and, when once they were fortified, trade follow'd of course, to such as were seated on the sea-coast : but, notwithstanding these improvements, wars did not cease, nor was piracy given over ; but the art of managing military affairs was brought to great perfection, especially after the *Trojan* war ; the consequences of which embroil'd the *Greek* states, and scatter'd the seeds of contention so wide, that many of them sprung up in the days of *Homer*, and afforded him the

means of painting from the life those bold and moving scenes which render his poem inimitable. Our author digresses here, in order to account for the pleasure which we receive from the representation of natural and simple manners : he then proceeds to shew, that as the *marvellous* is the nerve of the *Epic* strain, so, in a regular well-order'd state, there can no proper subjects, for this kind of poetry, arise without the intervention of a civil war ; and therefore he is convinced that the noble lord, to whom he writes, how much soever he may be pleas'd with this sublime kind of poetry, will however join in the wish, *That we may never be a proper subject of an heroic poem*. He next obviates an objection, which might probably enough have been suggested to what he has advanced on this head, *viz.* that the licence allow'd to poets may enable them to feign with success such manners as are requisite to form a work of this sort. But, to describe with life and spirit, it is necessary for an author to have seen the things he represents ; and a multitude of instances make it plain, that none have written happily on any other foundation. This sufficiently shews, that the objection be-  
fore-

fore-mention'd is of no force ; since, in such a case, the poet must be driven to the imitation of the ancients, and thereby lose that spirit which can alone support the *Epic* strain. He illustrates these observations, by giving us the characters of cardinal *Bembo* and *Giovanni Trissino*, and by remarking on the causes which have given reputation to some of the greatest modern poets. Then, returning to his subject, he applies these reflections thereto, concluding this section in these words : “ In short, it may be said of *Homer*, and of every poet who has wrote well, that what he felt and saw, that he described ; and that *Homer* had the good fortune to see and learn the *Grecian* manners, at their true pitch and happiest temper of verse : had he been born much sooner, he would have seen nothing but nakedness and barbarity : had he come much later, he had fallen in the times either of wide policy and peace, or of general wars, when private passions are buried in the common order and establish'd discipline.”

The language of a people, according to our author, goes

along with their manners, and accompanies them both in their growth and decay : a convention of men of spirit and understanding, who have the business of a city or state to manage (if they have not their orders to receive in silence from a superior) will naturally produce speakers and eloquence. The same men, if they quit their town, and look abroad, will speak of the objects presented to them by nature's face with the same freedom and happiness of expression : and if, in a wide country, there are many societies, speaking the same tongue, but in different dialects, the language will reap the benefit, and be enrich'd with new words, phrases and metaphors, according to the temper and genius of the several people ; while each improve their own, because it is used by their governors in their own independent state. Our author goes on to examine what were the distinguishing properties of ancient language, which, consisting chiefly of vocal marks to express several passions, he thinks were pronounced in a high tone, resembling rather singing than speaking ; whence he accounts for the similarity of the \* *Greek* words signifying to *speak* and to *sing* ; as also

\* ΑΥΔΑΕΙΝ, to speak ; and ΑΔΕΙΝ, to sing

also for the origin of that ancient opinion, *that poetry was before prose*. Pursuing this subject, he gives us several entertaining, as well as proper quotations, from ancient and modern authors, which leads him to the establishing this proposition, from evidence as well as argument; since it appears, from a strict examination that the *primitive parts* of the languages, reputed *original*, are many of the rough, undeclined, impersonal monosyllables; expressive commonly of the *biggest passions*, and most *striking objects*, that present themselves in *solitary savage life*. From this deduction, it is plain, that any language, thus formed, must be full of metaphor; and that metaphor of the boldest, daring, and most natural kind: for words taken wholly from rough nature, and invented under some passion, as terror, rage or want (which readily extorts sounds from men) would be expressive of that fanaticism and dread which is incident to creatures living wild. These speculations are pursued by the author through a considerable space, with great force of thought, and a peculiar felicity in expression. He considers the sources of the *Greek* language, which he probably conjectures to have begun up-

on a very small stock, which the *Pelasgi* spoke, and the old inhabitants of the northern parts of *Greece*, but the necessity of labour and contrivance; a growing commerce, and, more than any thing besides, the number of free cities and independent governments, soon raised a nobler language than either of the originals. It was at first *simple, unconfined, and free*; as was their life: the *politic* style grew with their *constitution*, and was at its *height* when they had most affairs of that kind, and of the greatest consequence, to manage; and, when a rough warlike people had stripped them of their liberty, they had recourse to *philosophy* and *learning*. The councils of a free state are managed by *speaking*, which quickly introduce eloquence and the arts of persuasion: when *these* turn useless, or dangerous in publick, men betake themselves to less obnoxious subjects. These were the stages thro' which the *Greek* language passed: it went thro' them slowly, and had time to receive the impression of each: it lasted long, and had far outlived the *Latin*, as it had begun before; the reason was, that, amidst all the broils of *Greece*, they had still liberty and employment enough, ei-  
ther

ther in business or literature, to keep alive something of their spirit and language: *that* will always follow our fortunes, and be fitted to our affairs and condition; for, in fact, what else do we talk of? For this reason, a flourishing happy nation, not over-disciplin'd at the beginning, that, after a long struggle and much trial, comes to excel in every art of peace and war; such a nation must speak the noblest language; which, in its turn, because of the instability of human affairs, has no security for its duration. From these principles this deduction seems to be fairly drawn: "That when, by the progression above-mention'd, the *Greek* language was brought to express all the best and bravest of the human feelings, and retain'd a sufficient quantity of its *original*, *amazing*, *metaphoric* tincture; at that point of time did Homer write." Our author concludes this section with some observations on the *Eneid*; in which the deficiency of that poem, in point of language, and the causes of that deficiency, are clearly and politely explain'd.

The religion of the ancient *Greeks* is consider'd in the fourth section. Our author very justly derives the religi-

ous belief, the solemn ceremonies, and all the mysterious rites of the *Greek* nation, from the *Egyptians*; a people, who, as our author rightly observes, were very early acquainted with the power such notions have over the minds of men; and who, on that account, framed these allegorical doctrines with great care, and transmitted them under the strictest ties of profound and pious secrecy. Hence the number of monstrous stories concerning their gods, which the first *Grecian* sages that travelled into *Egypt* certainly understood, and explain'd to their adepts; among whom, after some descents, *Hesiod* and *Homer* are to be reckon'd: but falling afterwards into the hands of men of warm fancies, who thought they might invent as well as their masters, there were many traditional stories tack'd to the former; sometimes untowardly enough, and sometimes so as to make a tolerable piece of the *literal* relation; but confounding when applied to the *allegory*. This kind of religion having been transplanted into *Greece*, found it a very proper soil for such a plantation: it took deep root in the minds of the *Greeks*, who were grossly ignorant, and prepossess'd with no rival opinions; they made additions

additions to it of their own ; and, in a few ages, it was incorporated with their *manners*, mix'd itself with their language, and gain'd *universal belief*. Such was its condition when *Homer* made his appearance in the world : it had attained its vigour, and had not lost the grace of *novelty* and *youth*. This is the crisis when every body affects to talk in the prevailing style ; which, join'd with the early metaphorical *Cast* of the language, is one great reason of the constant allegory in the ancient writings. For the farther advantages which poetry might reap from a religion so fram'd, our author promises to mention them in another place : in the mean while, he goes on to consider the *manners of the times*. After a few general reflections, he comes to apply this point, by observing, that arms was at that time the honour'd profession, and a *publick spirit* the courted character ; the most sublime virtues were then realities, because men were by necessity compelled to the practice of those sublime virtues : nor is it any wonder, that the representations of such general characters bear the marks of *truth*, and far out-shine those taken from counterfeit worth, or fainter patterns. This natu-

rally leads him to the great point for which this section was composed. " In most of  
 " the *Greek* cities (says he)  
 " *policy* and *laws* were but  
 " just forming when *Homer*  
 " came into the world. The  
 " first sketches of them were  
 " extremely simple ; gene-  
 " rally prohibitions from vio-  
 " lence, or such regulations  
 " of manners as we should  
 " think unnecessary and bar-  
 " barous. The tribes were but  
 " beginning to live secure  
 " within the walls of their  
 " new-fenced towns, and had  
 " as yet neither time nor skill  
 " to frame a domestick po-  
 " licy or municipal laws ;  
 " and far less to think of  
 " publick methods of train-  
 " ing up their citizens : *they*  
 " *lived naturally*, and were  
 " govern'd by the *natural*  
 " *poise* of the passions, as it  
 " is settled in every human  
 " breast. This made them  
 " speak and act, without  
 " other restraint than their  
 " own native apprehensions  
 " of *good* and *evil*, *just* and  
 " *unjust*, each as he was  
 " prompted from *within*.  
 " These manners afford the  
 " most *natural* pictures, and  
 " proper words to paint  
 " them." And from these  
 causes it comes to pass, that  
 most nations are so delighted  
 with their ancient poets ; be-  
 fore

fore they are polish'd into flattery and falshood, we feel both the force of their words, and the truth of their thoughts; which *Virgil* was so well acquainted with, that he borrow'd from *Ennius* his antiquated terms, and the strong obsolete turn of his sentences, in order to give his admirable poem that degree of strength which must have been wanting, if a more polish'd language had been used.

In the fifth section the author judiciously remarks, that it must give pleasure to the truly good, when they find that it is a maxim, establish'd on solid reasons, that without virtue there can be no true poetry; which is thus demonstrated: it depends upon the manners of a nation to form their characters, and animate their language; if their manners are sound and entire, their speech will accompany and do them justice; if they rise higher, and become noble and heroic, as they must do to be fit for poetry, what is this but virtue in all her lustre and dignity? since heroism is nothing else than a disinterested love of mankind and our country, unaw'd by dangers, and unwearyed by toils. The necessity of liberty, in the place where an *Epic* poem is composed, is next insisted on by our author,

and very fully made good: he remarks too, that there is a certain interval between the high liberty and enslavement of a state, in which many great and distinguish'd characters appear; and for this he gives us very probable reasons. “ The times of such  
“ struggles (says he) have a  
“ kind of *liberty* peculiar to  
“ themselves; they raise a  
“ free and active spirit, which  
“ overspreads the country;  
“ every man finds himself, on  
“ such occasions, his own  
“ master, and that he *may be*  
“ whatever he can *make him-*  
“ self: he knows not how  
“ high he may rise, and is  
“ unaw'd by laws, which are  
“ then of no force: he finds  
“ his own weight, tries his  
“ own strength, and, if there  
“ is any hidden worth, or  
“ curbed mettle in him, cer-  
“ tainly shews and gives it  
“ vent. Accordingly we see,  
“ that the genius's produced  
“ at these times, give great  
“ proofs of *reach* and *capaci-*  
“ *ty*, especially in politick  
“ managements and civil af-  
“ fairs, in the largest sense.  
“ The abstract *sciences* are ge-  
“ nerally the product of *lei-*  
“ *sure* and *quiet*; but those  
“ that have respect to *man*,  
“ and take their aim from  
“ the human heart, are best  
“ learned in employment and  
“ agita-

“ agitation. It was when  
 “ *Greece* was ill-settled, when  
 “ violence prevailed in many  
 “ places, amidst the confusion  
 “ of the wandering tribes,  
 “ that *Homer* produced his  
 “ immortal poem; and it  
 “ was when *Italy* was torn  
 “ in pieces, when the little  
 “ states were leagued against  
 “ each other; in a word, in  
 “ the heat of the struggle and  
 “ bloodshed of the *Guelfe*  
 “ and *Ghibelline* parties, that  
 “ *Dante* withdrew from his  
 “ country, and made the  
 “ strongest draught of men,  
 “ and their passions, that  
 “ stands in the records of  
 “ modern poetry. The au-  
 “ thor of the *Eneid* lived in a  
 “ time of disorder and pub-  
 “ lick ruin: he saw the mis-  
 “ tress of the world become  
 “ twice a prey to lawless  
 “ power; her constitution de-  
 “ stroy’d, and prices set up-  
 “ on the heads of her bravest  
 “ sons for opposing tyranny.”  
 To this he adds, that *Para-*  
*dise lost*, tho’ it treats of a  
 sublimer theme, and refuses  
 the measure of human actions,  
 took its birth however when  
 unhappy *Britain* was plunged  
 in all the calamities of *civil*  
*rage*. He closes this section  
 with the proposal and solution  
 of the following objection:  
 “ Since a polish’d language,  
 “ and the deference paid to

“ an absolute court, are in-  
 “ compatible to the nobler  
 “ kinds of poetry, how came  
 “ the *new* comedy to excel  
 “ the *old*, which had all li-  
 “ berty of language and man-  
 “ ners, while the other grew  
 “ up under the influence of  
 “ luxury, and the awe of the  
 “ *Macedonian* power?”

In the sixth section our en-  
 quirer takes notice, that from  
 his manner of reasoning, in  
 respect to the influence that  
 publick manners have upon  
 writings, this question will,  
 without doubt, recur: “ Since  
 “ it is absolutely the *conjunc-*  
 “ *ture* and *manners* of the  
 “ *times* that produce poets,  
 “ how have we but one *Ho-*  
 “ *mer*? Could a space of  
 “ two or three hundred years,  
 “ when *Greece* and the coast  
 “ of *Asia* was in a proper  
 “ temperament for such for-  
 “ mations, bring forth but  
 “ *one*? ” To this, he tells  
 us, the answer is obvious; that  
 tho’ it be absolutely necessary,  
 yet it is not the only condition;  
 there are many required be-  
 sides, too many to be enume-  
 rated: our author instances  
 therefore but one, *viz.* a uni-  
 versal elevated genius; a qua-  
 lity so rare, that the excellent  
 Sir *William Temple* seems to  
 think, “ That of all the num-  
 “ bers of mankind, that live  
 “ within the compass of a  
 “ thousand

“ years, for one man that is  
 “ born capable of making a  
 “ a great poet, there may be  
 “ a thousand born capable of  
 “ making as great generals,  
 “ or ministers of state, as the  
 “ most renown’d in story.”  
 Yet the period just mention’d,  
 when the *manners*, the *religion*,  
 and *language* of *Greece*  
 were at their proper pitch for  
 poetry, produced *Linus*, *Orpheus*,  
*Museus*, and *Amphion*; men  
 who are handed down to us,  
 as the masters of verse, by  
 the greatest of their successors:  
 their songs, it is true, are long  
 since perish’d; but the wise  
 and peaceful *Hesiod*, whose  
 compositions in part have  
 reach’d us, and commands our  
 admiration, owes his *birth* to  
 the same *period*. This, according  
 to our judicious author, affords  
 a clear solution of that problem,  
 which the elegant *Velleius Paterculus*  
 thought so exceeding strange: “ That  
 “ the great masters, in every  
 “ *profession* and *science*, always  
 “ appear in the same period  
 “ of *time*, and are of the same  
 “ cast and model.” Which  
 some have called in the influence  
 of the stars to account for, and  
 the historian himself would have  
 us believe arises chiefly from  
 emulation. In the early ages  
 of the *Grecian* state, the wild  
 and barbarous inhabitants wanted  
 the assis-

tance of the muses to soften  
 and tame them: they stood  
 in need of being impress’d  
 with an awe of superior and  
 irresistible powers, and a  
 liking to social life: they  
 wanted a *mythology* to lead  
 them by *fear* and *dread* (the  
 only holds to be taken of a  
 rude multitude) into a feeling  
 of *natural causes*, and their  
*influences* upon our lives and  
 actions; the wise and good  
 among them saw this necessity,  
 and supplied it: they had  
*religion* for their theme, and  
 the *service* of mankind for the  
 end of their song. How unlike  
 in this to some late *authors*  
 of our own growth! who, I  
 hardly know for *what* end,  
 have written against the  
*religion* of their country; and,  
 without pretending to substitute  
 any thing better, or more  
 practicable in its place, would  
 deprive us of our happy  
 establishment; merely, as it  
 would seem, for the pleasure  
 of pulling down, and doing  
 mischief. But the first men  
 of science in *Greece*, better  
 instructed in human nature,  
 and knowing the advantages  
 of national rites, wrote in a  
 different strain: the formation  
 of *things*, the birth of their  
*gods*, their properties and  
 exploits, first inform’d their  
 numbers; next were celebrated  
 the heroes, who had extirpated  
 tyrants,

*rants*, destroy'd *monsters*, and subdued *robbers*. These bards were from hence in the highest estimation; no prince's court seems to have been without one or more of them; and they resorted to all the great feasts and high solemnities, to assist at the sacrifices, and to entertain the people.

In the foregoing sections *Homer's* publick advantages have been fully set forth: our author comes now to speak of his personal good fortune, and to examine, "What effect his  
" private *education*, his way  
" of *life*, and *success* in it,  
" must have upon him as a  
" poet." The tradition concerning his education, he tells us, is very lame; and he gives us very good reasons why learning was but low in that part of the world where he was born and brought up. The mean circumstances of *Homer's* family carried him and his mother to the house of *Phemius*, who was one of the *Aoidoi*, or *Bards*, among whom all the learning of those times was: from him *Homer* receiv'd the first tinctures of knowledge; improved by his instructions, and in time became his successor. Instead therefore of insisting on so obscure a point as the education of this mighty poet, our author enters upon the discussion

of this question: "What  
" learning was then in be-  
" ing, and what kind of  
" knowledge it was possible  
" in that age for a man to  
" acquire." In consequence of this, he observes rightly, that the antiquity of poetry among the *Greeks* was so great, that *Pliny* could not determine about it; but contented himself with affirming, that it was certain there were poems before the *Trojan* war. We must therefore seek for the rise of this noble art somewhere else; and our author seems to have discover'd its true fountain. While the policies of *Greece* (as he rightly remarks) were but forming, *Affyria*, *Phœnicia*, and *Egypt*, were flourishing kingdoms, under regular governments, and happy in the riches of their soil, and their methods of improving it. The long peace they enjoy'd, and the arts which such times produced, brought a great part of the administration into the hands of the sacred order; who took all possible care to keep up their authority; and, being envious of their discoveries, were at pains to find out means how to transmit them to their descendants, without imparting them to the vulgar. \* Here was the origin of *allegory* and *parable*, or at least

least the *Egyptian* priests, taking notice how natural it was for men to employ allusions, and speak in similitude built upon it, settled the tropes and metaphors, and improv'd it into an art: nor did they stop here, but invented and borrow'd a new character for writing these allegories, which they called *holy letters*; because they were to be known only by the priests, and not to be used by them, but in divine matters. The first planters and improvers of *Greece* were *Danaus* the *Egyptian*, *Cadmus* the *Phenician*, and *Pelops* the *Phrygian*: it is no wonder therefore that we find them so early tinctured with the *Asiatic* manners; especially if we reflect, that the first *sages* among the *Greeks* drew their science from these countries, and their *theology* particularly from *Egypt*: in imitation of their masters, they wrapped up their doctrines in fable, tho' they had not an unknown character to write in; so that their precepts and opinions came to appear, when their verses were publish'd, and their manner was known. *Linus* is accounted the parent of their poetry, and, in the *Egyptian* records, stands at the head of the worthies who came into that country in quest of knowledge. Coeval with *Linus* was

*Anthes*, who wrote hymns to celebrate the glory of the *Gods*. *Pampho*, a native of *Attica*, and disciple of *Linus*, first sung of the *Graces*; and *Homer* is said to have alter'd a hymn of his to *Jupiter* for the better: but *Orpheus*, that great name in poetry, has eclipsed the fame of all the rest; he likewise is said to have been one of *Linus's* scholars; tho' *Plutarch* expressly affirms, that he imitated no man in his poetry or musick, but was himself an *original*. It is however certain, that he made the same voyage as his supposed *master* had done into *Egypt*; where he staid long, and was let into the secrets of their philosophy and religion. At his *return*, he did greater services to his country, or rather to the people he chose to live with; for he is thought to have been originally from *Thrace*: his actions are themselves involved in *allegory*, and related in the same kind of fable as he was wont to employ about his *Gods* and *Heroes*. Whether he left any thing of his own in *writing*, our author is in great doubt; tho' he finds no reason to conclude he did not: but the same of his knowledge was so high, that we have from *Suidas* the *titles* of sixteen or seventeen poems written under his name, chiefly

chiefly by the *Pythagoreans*, who embraced his doctrines; and from others we may reckon up twice the number: they are *philosophical, prophetic, and religious*; and were believed to contain his real opinions, and the genuine strain of his verse: he directed these his mystical lessons to raise an awe of the Gods in the breasts of his hearers, that he might restrain them from barbarity and bloodshed, and charm them into humanity and social manners. *Musæus* was *Orpheus's* fam'd scholar, or perhaps his son; and many other bards, whose names and reputations have reach'd even to these distant ages, were either his cotemporaries, or flourish'd between him and *Homer*. Our author gives us some light into the nature of their writings, which he with great probability asserts to have been read and studied by *Homer*. "And thus (says he) we find an answer to the question, *What learning was then in being?* and *What kind of knowledge it was possible in Homer's days to acquire?* It was wholly *fabulous* and *allegorical*. The powers of nature and human passions made the subject, and they described their various effects with some analogy

and resemblance to human actions. They began with the rise of things; their vicissitudes and transformations defined their nature and influence, and, in their metaphorical style, gave to each a *person, a speech, and method of operation*, conformable to their fancied qualities."

In the opening of the eighth section, our author, after a decent apology, ventures on the following assertion: "That *Homer's* being born poor, and living a strolling indigent bard, was, in relation to his poetry, the greatest happiness that could befall him." In order to support this paradox, he observes, that his poverty introduced him to *Phemius*, and acquired him the peculiar advantage of living in the house with his master, in a double relation of a scholar and a son: the same necessity made him glad to be *Phemius's* successor, and determined him to continue in the profession of an *Aoidos*, or strolling bard. This employment, in a country like Greece, where nature was not obstructed in any of her operations, rose quickly into high credit; and many instances might be produced from history, as well of the deserts of these bards, as of the honours al-

low'd

low'd them. There is a testimony to this purpose, in the *hymn to Latona*, and her divine offspring *Apollo* and *Diana*, which is ascribed, with great appearance of truth, to *Homer*: it was sung at the feast held at *Delos*: "Hail, *Heavenly Powers*, says the bard, whose praises I sing; let me also be remember'd in the ages to come: and when any one, born of the tribes of men, comes hither a weary traveller, and enquires, *Who is the sweetest of the singing men that resort to your feasts, and whom you most delight to hear?* Then do you make answer for me; 'Tis the blind man that dwells in *Chios*: — his songs excel all that can e'er be sung." The island of *Chios* was no ill-chosen retreat: it enjoy'd the diffusive benignity of the climate in common with the rest of that delicious coast; but, peculiar to itself, it produced the richest wine that ever *Greece* could boast of; and abounded in the other ingredients of the pleasures of the ancients, the finest oil. What made this so necessary, was the use of the *Hot Bath*, which was an article in their living they rated so high, as to set it upon a footing with the joys of wine, and the charms of the fair:

and the *three* together were thought so sweet by the ancient men of pleasure, that *life*, in their opinion, was not worth keeping without them. Few people, in our author's opinion, have conceived a just notion of the profession of a bard; and he seems to have assigned a true reason for this, when he refers it to our having no character like it in the modern world: he therefore endeavours to give us some idea of its nature, dignity, and advantages: it was indeed no life of wealth or power; but of great ease and much honour; the *Aoidoi* were welcome to kings and courts; were necessary at feasts and sacrifices; and were highly revered by the people. As this condition was in itself of the utmost importance to a poet, so the consequences of it were almost equally happy. The *Aoidoi*, or *Bards*, were under a necessity of frequent travelling, and every now and then exercising their vein upon the greatest subjects. In this situation did *Homer* begin to wander over *Greece*, carrying with him those qualities that procured him a welcome wherever he came. At this time the *Grecian* cities, and her growing commonwealths, afforded the noblest scene to the inquisitive traveller. *Homer*

staid so long in each of them as was necessary to see, but not be moulded, into their manners. The order of a town, and the forms brought into the common city-life, elude the passions, and abate their force, by turning them upon little objects; but he neither led a country nor a town life; and was in this respect truly a *citizen of the universe*: his profession gave him access into the houses of the greatest men; and the effects of it appear in almost every line of his works: from whence it is evident, that he was familiarly acquainted with their way of living, their wealth, their manner of entertaining, their plate, their curiosities, and even the trinkets of their women. The manner in which he *recited*, obliged him to a simple intelligible style: he might indeed tell wonderful stories of strange performances, and places strange; but they must be plainly told, and with a constant eye, to *natural manners* and *human passions*: he needed not keep strictly to them; that would raise no admiration, but with an analogy or likeness, such as the tenor and circumstance of the *tender* or *woeful* tale would bear. It would be tedious to insist on every particular in the life of

a *rhapsodist*: however, there are two advantages more, which must be mention'd; the first is the facility in composing, which must arise from habit. *Enstathius* says of *Homer*, that he breathed nothing but verse; and was so possessed with the *heroic muse*, as to speak in numbers with more ease than others in prose. The second peculiarity which attends a strolling life, is his great returns of mirth and humour. After suffering cold and fatigue, a flood of joy comes impetuous upon a man when he is refresh'd, and begins to grow warm. Thus his wandering about furnish'd him with the stories and other materials of which he composed his poems, as the continual practice of versifying taught him the art of poetry; and as he ow'd all his talents to nature, so we may, from his works, conclude, that in other sciences she was the sole mistress; for, among all his characters, there is not one wherein we find so much as a word of what we call acquired parts. As to poets in particular, *Homer* expressly ascribes their raptures to inspiration; on which our author, having given us his thoughts freely, concludes this section thus: "These are high pretensions, and should be strongly supported."

“ ported before they are ad-  
 “ mitted : but if one, unin-  
 “ fected with the poetical spi-  
 “ rit, was to search for their  
 “ meaning in *prose*, it seems  
 “ to say, *That as there is no*  
 “ *poetry without genius, so*  
 “ *that genius itself has its fits*  
 “ *and seasons, which are pro-*  
 “ *voked and indulged no-where*  
 “ *so happily, as in the strolling*  
 “ *unanxious life of an Aoidos,*  
 “ *or Bard.*

The circumstances in which the Greek affairs were, at the time when *Homer* appeared, and the manner in which he lived, tho’ they contributed in a great measure to form his character, and to give him such a readiness in composing, as might well enough pass for the effects of divine assistance ; yet they did not entirely perfect him. He knew the *Greek* republicks thoroughly : his poems shew, that he was not ignorant of foreign countries : he appears, upon occasion, a great *genealogist*, a knowing *historian*, and, which is most to our purpose, a wonderful *geographer*. This no inspiration will account for : we must therefore accompany him in the second part of his travels, his visiting *Egypt* and the *East*. Among the other stories contrived by his admirers, there is one told by *Hephæstion*, that conceals a meaning very dif-

ferent from its first appearance : he says, “ That a lady  
 “ of *Memphis*, the daughter  
 “ of *Nicarchus*, by name  
 “ *PHANCY*, *excelling in wis-*  
 “ *dom*, composed two poems,  
 “ *The war of Troy*, and *The*  
 “ *wanderings of Ulysses*, and  
 “ laid them up in the *Holy*  
 “ *Place* of the temple of *Vul-*  
 “ *can* at *Memphis* : that *Ho-*  
 “ *mer* coming there, found  
 “ means to get *copies* of them  
 “ from the *sacred scribe* *PHA-*  
 “ *NITES*, and out of them  
 “ composed his *Iliad* and his  
 “ *Odyssey*.” The sense put  
 upon this by the learned is, that *Homer* was either an *Egyptian* born (for so many have suspected) or that, having his great genius cultivated by an *Egyptian* education, he was there enabled to compose his admired poems. Our author proceeds to take a view of the several arguments adduced to prove the travels of *Homer* into *Egypt* : on the whole, he seems to think, that tho’ they come not up fully to the fact, they however render the truth thereof more than probable. What advantages might accrue to that great poet from his peregrinations in that civiliz’d empire, he sets forth in very expressive terms : There (as he tells us) he might see *riches*, *pleasures* and *magnificence* reconciled (as far as

the nature of things will allow) with *safety* and *good order*: here was the noblest *contrast*, and most instructive opposition, that *any* conjuncture can offer to our view: he came from a country where *nature* govern'd, and went to another, where, from the highest achievement, to the smallest action in life, every thing was directed by *settled rules* and a *digested policy*: here was a *people* so thoroughly moulded to their government, that *education* seemed to have taken the place of *nature*; and, by a depth of thought in the legislature, was laid so *true*, and made to take such *bold* of the passions, that it seemed rather to *create* than *direct* them. This appeared long after *Homer's* days, in their tenaciousness of their own customs, under a frequent change of masters, and their infecting all the nations, that learned their religion or politicks from them, with the same *stubbornness* and *bigottry*. Led on by these reflections, our author describes the mythology of *Homer*; he discovers a perfect acquaintance with all that ancient or modern authors have said upon so intricate a subject; and, after having thrown together a vast number of curious remarks and pertinent observations, he con-

cludes this section with the following elegant quotation from *Plato*: "But the most beautiful madness and amiable possession, is, when the love of the *musés* seizes upon a soft and susceptible mind; it is then that it exalts the soul, and, throwing it into ecstasies, makes it break forth in *hymns* and *songs*, and other kinds of poesy, and celebrate the high achievements of ancient times, and instruct the generations to come. This is so certain, that whoever he be that pretends to the favours of the *musé*, without partaking of this madness, from an opinion perhaps that art alone is sufficient to make a poet, he may assure himself that he will fail in his character, his works will be lame, and, while the productions of the inspired ecstatic train are read and admired, his sober performance will sink in oblivion. Let us acquiesce in this sentence, *My Lord*, in so far as it regards poetry; and, after a fruitless attempt or two, get loose at last from an infectious subject."

In the tenth section the author examines the ænigmatical knowledge of the *Egyptians*. He had before asserted, that

*Homer* had borrow'd many things from the *theology* of that learned nation: he now takes the opportunity of proving at least the reasonableness of this proposition, as well as of some other points, which, in the current of his essay, he had affirm'd. The method he takes for this purpose is citing and comparing several passages from this *poet*, and from other authors of antiquity: on the whole he tells us, we may safely conclude, that *Homer* drew his *mythology* from three sources; first, from the form of *worship* already establish'd in his country; secondly, from the *traditional doctrines* of *Orpheus* and *Melampus*, who first form'd the *Grecian ceremonies*, and gave that people a notion of *immortality*; and lastly, which was the parent of the other two, from the *Egyptian learning*. The disputes which have reign'd so long in the learned world on this topic, obliges him to take notice of a passage relating to *Homer*, recorded by *Diodorus Siculus*; who says, that *Thebes* being sack'd a second time by *Alcmenon*, among the captives he carried off was the old blind prophet *Tiresias*, who died by the way; but his daughter, the celebrated *Manto*, was sent to *Delphi*, as part

of the spoil: she was no less skilled in *divination* than her father; and, while she staid in *Apollo's* temple, made great improvements in the *art*: she was favour'd by the *God*; and, having a wondrous genius, compos'd *oracles* of all kinds, and in different forms, *allegorical, prophetic, and moral*. These were preserved in the temple; and from them, says the historian, *Homer borrow'd many verses, and inserted them as ornaments into his own poetry*. Our author does not think that this story should be received entire; neither is he of opinion, that it should be utterly rejected: he endeavours, with immense labour, to scrutinize this business to the bottom, and to sift out every particle of truth: his disquisitions are curious and entertaining, as well as learned; but they are too long to be inserted here; and therefore let us content ourselves with considering our author's thoughts, on the manner in which the *Heathen Deities* are described in the *Illiad*. *Homer's Gods* are finely distributed between the two armies, the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*: the *Greeks*, naturally wise and brave, and so form'd by the *temperature* of their *climate*, have *Pallas* and *Juno* of their party: the *Trojans* have *Mars*,

or, the impetuous *sally* of war, *Venus*, or *Effeminacy*, and *Apollo*, a mixed kind of divinity; the God of *Heat*, *ecstatic Music*, and *poetic Passion*. *Jupiter*, or the *Universal Nature*, and particularly the influences of the *Celestial Region*, favours sometimes the one, and sometimes the other; but generally the *Greeks*. *Neptune* is entirely *Grecian*, as they were lords of the *sea*. *Mercury* and *Diana* have little to do in the war; but are mention'd by the *poet*, the one from the *Egyptian* tradition, *Latona's* opposite, and the *conductor* of departed souls; the other, as a *Power*, no friend to the *ladies*, whom she kills at pleasure. These are what we may call the *active Gods*; and this is their general arrangement. As for *Saturn* or *Time*, *Ceres* or the *Earth*, *Pluto* or *Hell*, they are a kind of *stable Deities*, that support the *whole* of things, but have little particular influence upon any single action: if we descend to their several parts, and look nearer still into the poet's conduct, we shall find every God in his becoming employment, and acting consistently with the power he represents. *Phæbus*, or the *Sun*, the God of *Heat* and *Health*, in his wrath sends a plague. *Achilles*, from a sensation of

the corruption of the *Air* now unwholesom, or, in the poet's style, being warn'd by *Juno*, calls an assembly; provok'd by *Agamemnon*, *Pallas* or *Reflection* reasons with him, and quiets him: his *armour* is made by *Vulcan*, and his vast nimbleness and humidity makes him properly the son of a *sea goddess*. The wife and patient *Ulysses* is favour'd by *Minerva*; and it is very remarkable, that *Homer* never varies this *titular numen*, nor represents his *hero* under any other tuition than the *Blue-eyed Maids*. It might have embellish'd his narration, and given play to his fancy; but he has prefer'd the truth of the character, and stuck close to his allegory. The frequent shipwrecks, and bad fortune of the hero at *sea*, is told in poetical language, by saying, *He was hated by NEPTUNE*; in the same manner as the man, who committed any outrage when drunk, was under the displeasure of *Bacchus*. The other chiefs mention'd in the *Iliad* are frequently assisted or protected by some *divine person*, according to the nature of the occasion, and their personal qualities. From hence our author takes occasion to examine the character of *Virgil* in this particular: after which, he returns to the con-

sideration

sideration of *Homer's* mythology; and closes this section with a long and beautiful quotation from *Plato*.

In the eleventh section, we find many other parts of *Homer's* poems illustrated by an enquiry into their author's knowledge in history and geography, and the means by which he acquired it. Our author is of opinion, that he drew a great part of his skill from the *Phenicians*, who were then a wide trading people, and knew much more concerning the distant parts of the world than any other people did. His reasons for believing, that *Homer* obtained his chief lights from them are these; by staying in *Greece*, and making short voyages among the *islands*, or even down to *Egypt*: he could never learn, that the *earth* was begirt on all sides with the *ocean*, as he often says it is. But the *Phenicians*, who had made long voyages upon the *Red* and *Mediterranean Seas*; who had passed thro' the *Streight of Gibraltar*, and sail'd the coast on either hand before *Homer's* days, and were actually making such voyages every year during his life; they might tell him, that wherever they came they found the general barrier was the *ocean*. From the same sea-

faring people he must have heard what countries were the *boundaries* and *ends*, as he calls them, of the habitable globe. Some of these he plainly names by their proper appellations; others of them he points out by such *marks* and *peculiarities*, as demonstrate that he was not ignorant of their situation. To the *south*, he directly mentions *Africk*, *Ethiopia*, and what we take for *Arabia*, as the uttermost parts of the world: to the *north*, he describes the life of the *Hyperboreans*, just as we know the *Scythians* and *Tartars* lived, people that inhabit the *northern* continent: to the *east* and *west*, he names no country; but says frequently, *that the sun rises from, and sets in the ocean*; which can have no other meaning, than that the *Asiatick* continent on the *east*, and the *European* on the *west* are bounded by the *watry element*. This is the only sense the expression will bear; and any other put upon it makes it a plain absurdity. It is the more remarkable, as it comes from a man who lived between two great undiscover'd lands; and his descriptions are such, as shew plainly, he had not his intelligence from inland travellers, but from a trading people; inasmuch as he speaks only  
of

of their coasts, their ports, and the manners of the people dwelling thereabouts. As for the *Mediterranean*, we have his description of the coast quite around it; but with this difference, that he speaks of the *north-end* of it so particularly, as to convince his reader, that he had visited it in person: but when he comes to mention the countries and nations lying round the *west-end* of that sea, he talks of them as a man who had heard of these places from travellers; that is, from such people as willingly tell wonders of the distant regions they have seen, and take pleasure in amazing people with stories of giants and monsters, or of any thing out of the common road of life, either for good or ill. Yet however strange the stories of our famous poet may seem, it is certainly a just observation, that to frame a new wonder, without any previous foundation from truth, is not in the manner of *Homer*. This our author supports, by tracing most of the extraordinary stories in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* to their respective sources, and examining the several ornaments with which he adorn'd them. How far *Homer* himself might credit the stories told him by the *Phenicians*, is a speculation which

furnishes several very pertinent remarks, of great use in judging of the effects wrought by marvellous descriptions in poetry. After this, the author sums up the several particulars he has already gone thro' and accounted for, in the following paragraph, with which he closes this section: "Thus  
 " we have run over *Homer's*  
 " advantages from nature and  
 " education: we have survey'd the *climate* where he  
 " was born: we have consider'd the *manners* of his  
 " country, its *languages* and  
 " *religion*; and have found,  
 " from the nature of things,  
 " and their constant effects,  
 " that they were *all* in the  
 " happiest temper for description and poesy: we have  
 " gone farther, and traced  
 " him in his *private education*, his *employment*, and  
 " the manner of his life, and  
 " found them of the same  
 " nature and tendency; and,  
 " to account for the wide  
 " knowledge of men and  
 " things that appear throughout his works, we have  
 " look'd abroad, and found  
 " *foreign countries* affording  
 " the happiest opportunities  
 " man's heart could wish for  
 " poetick improvement: their  
 " joint effects we have found  
 " verified in his descriptions  
 " and allusions, and in the  
 " numbers

" numbers of shining images  
 " that grace his writings ;  
 " but take them altogether,  
 " and they had not been able  
 " to raise him to his high  
 " station, if the noblest SUB-  
 " JECT that ever fired the  
 " fancy of a poet had not  
 " compleated his happiness.  
 " Let us, *My Lord*, consider  
 " it, and conclude the en-  
 " quiry.

In the opening of this his last section, our author observes, that of the two *heroick poems* written by *Homer*, the *first* contains an account of the hottest period of a long war between the confederate princes of *Greece* and the richest kingdom of *Asia*, with its dependencies : the *second* relates the consequences of that war, and the fates of the several *Chieftains* after the victory. *Homer* seems to have been destin'd for writing the history of the *whole transactions*, by being born in *one* country, residing in the *other*, and travelling much in *both*. It would be a difficult matter to enumerate the advantages of such a *situation* : it would be to resume the conditions in *manners, language, and travelling*, we found to be requisite in poetry ; and shewing that by *this means* they are included in *Homer's* fortunes. He appears to be the *only*

bard that equally knew the country of his *hero*, and that of his enemies ; and, except those poets who have sung of *civil wars*, where the contending parties are of the same country, and where, for that reason, there can be no variety of manners ; excepting those, I say, he seems, in *this respect*, likewise to be *singular* among the poets. That apparent veracity which adorns the descriptions of *Homer*, and points out to us, with all imaginable exactness, the several scenes in which the mighty things which are the subjects of his *song* were transacted, strike the imagination with infinitely more force than the most beautiful inventions of *modern writers*, how artfully soever they may be contrived. His acquaintance with places was not more happy than with persons. He had visited the greatest part of *Priam's* kingdom ; had conversed with the descendants of the *Trojans*, and had made himself master of all the minute circumstances relating to their families, action, houses, arms, horses, &c. which had been conserved by tradition. Thus no part of *Homer's* poems are destitute of truth ; but he speaks with the same ease and certainty of enemies as friends. These were great advantages ; but there

there is one yet to come, which to our author seems (and very justly too) much the greatest of them all, *viz.* the *material part* of his subject: “It was a prodigious rendezvous of the bravest inhabitants, and sons of the noblest families of a free country, wide and warlike, and engaged in a violent struggle of passions and arms, with another of more effeminate manners. The effect was, that it afforded him *real historic characters* for his *MODEL*.” To set this matter in a just light, and shew the vast extent of its influence, we need make but one reflection: “That such an assembly of chiefs of two great nations, displaying their virtues and vices upon the greatest and most interesting subjects, *must include the prime characters* of *MANKIND*; and of consequence present a poet with the most genuine and fairest materials that can beautify a human composition.” The verifying these observations, obliges our author to examine narrowly the principal characters which have been drawn by our illustrious poet; to reason upon them, to compare them with history, and with those drawn by other bards; whence he

concludes, his work is the great *drama of life*, acted in our view. There we see *virtue* and *piety* praised; *publick religion* promoted; *temperance*, *forgiveness* and *fortitude* extolled and rewarded; *truth* and *character* follow’d, and accordingly find it standing at the head of *human writings*. By these steps then, *Homer* is become the parent of poetry, and his *works* have reached their exalted station: by the *united influence* of the happiest *climate*, the most natural *manners*, the boldest *language*, and most expressive *religion*: when these were applied to so rich a *subject*, as the war between *Greece* and *Troy*, they produced the *ILIAD* and *ODYSSEY*. Their conjunct powers afford the wish’d for solution, and a proper answer to the first stated question. Since it is no wonder, if a *production*, which requires the *concourse* of so many dissimilar *causes*, so many wide *chances*, and uncommon *ingredients*, to make each excel (the absence or alteration of any one of which would spoil it) that such a production should appear but *once* in three or four thousand years; and that the imitations which resemble it most, with due regard to the *manners* of the *times*, should be next in esteem and value.

T H E